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THE "PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY" OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Education of Massachusetts.

For a number of years many people in Massachusetts have had visions of a great "People's University" where there would be equal opportunity for all its citizens, rich and poor, men and women, young and old. This commonwealth does not have a state university or state college giving instruction in general and professional subjects. It has, however, a large number of excellent universities and colleges supported by private endowments and tuition fees paid by students. With this large number of institutions of learning in a relatively small state, there has naturally been very much opposition to the establishment of such a state university or state college as should be worthy of the educational standards of the higher institutions of learning in this state. As a partial substitute for a state university the Department of University Extension was established in Massachusetts by an act of the General Court in 1915. Abstracts of the legislation establishing this department are given here:

The department of university extension is hereby authorized to cooperate with existing institutions of learning in the establishment and conduct of university extension and correspondence courses; to supervise the administration of all extension and correspondence courses which are supported in whole or in part by state revenues; and also, where that is deemed advisable, to establish and conduct university extension and correspondence courses for the benefit of residents of Massachusetts.

The said department for the purposes of such university extension or correspondence courses, may, with the consent of the proper city or town officials or school committees, use the school buildings or other public buildings and grounds of any city or town within the commonwealth, and may also use normal school buildings and grounds and, with the consent of the boards or commission in charge of the same, such other school buildings as are owned or controlled by the commonwealth.

According to this legislation the Department of University Extension has practically unlimited opportunities for educational activities, except in subjects relating to agriculture, which subjects

are well provided for in the State Agricultural College at Amherst. Plans for the organization and development of this department are intended to provide the facilities of a real People's University which will bring education of every grade, including college subjects to the "doors of the people."

A UNIVERSITY WITHOUT BUILDINGS

To carry out these objects in their fullest development it has seemed undesirable to provide a group of buildings in one location such as are ordinarily associated with the conception of a state university. When one city or town is selected for the location of a state institution, the people living in the immediate vicinity have unusual advantages, and these advantages are exceptionally important in the case of educational institutions in which the charges to students for board and room rent are very large items in the cost of an education. For these reasons, the Massachusetts Department of University Extension has been organized without making any provision for buildings to include recitation rooms and laboratories. Its administrative offices are located temporarily in the State House in Boston. Instruction in a great variety of subjects is now being offered by its professors and instructors in practically every city and town in the commonwealth where there is a reasonable demand.

Massachusetts is unusually well supplied with good buildings for public libraries and public schools. In fact all of the cities and also all the towns except two are provided with public libraries supported by public funds. These libraries and school buildings have rooms well suited for the meetings of university extension classes. The department must not, however, necessarily depend on the use of these public buildings for its classes as the legislation provided clearly for rented offices and buildings as might be required for the use of the department. It is the policy of the director to avoid, whenever possible, charges for rent, janitor services, heat, light, etc., as it seems only reasonable that the community receiving these educational advantages wholly at the expense of the state should provide the necessary rooms and services. In some cases classes have been organized in shops and factories, particularly for the accommodation of those employed in these places. Under such circumstances the

employer is expected to furnish for the classes the rooms and services other than instruction. A beginning has been made in the establishment of industrial classes, under such conditions as will bring educational opportunities in practical subjects not only to the home but also to the bench of the worker. Arrangements have been made and provided for the employment of a special agent of the department to give particular attention to industrial people, as it is believed that the industrial population of Massachusetts should receive unusual consideration. Exceptional opportunities should be offered to encourage their advancement in citizenship as well as in their trades. Similar commercial opportunities are offered in large stores and factories, particularly in accounting and salesmanship, including class instruction and practical demonstration and research in one of the large department stores in Boston famous for its modern methods of doing business.

NOT A COMPETITOR OF ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS

The educational activities of the Department of University Extension will not be in conflict or in competition with the colleges and universities in Massachusetts; but on the other hand it is the object of the department to supplement the work of these institutions and to coöperate with them in every possible way. Many of the instructors and lecturers employed by the department are secured for part time service from the faculties of these colleges and universities.

Very satisfactory methods of coöperation have been worked out between the colleges in the Connecticut Valley and the Department of University Extension. By these arrangements the department has secured the assistance of an advisory committee consisting of official representatives of Amherst College, the International Y. M. C. A. College, the Massachusetts Agricultural College, Mt. Holyoke College and Smith College. This committee representing the colleges has been very serviceable in suggesting courses of study to be offered, and in securing professors and instructors from the colleges best qualified for extension teaching. A most important service has also been performed by this committee in establishing a uniform rate of compensation for all teachers conducting extension classes, irrespective of their college rank; that is, the same compensation is paid to the teacher of an extension class whether he

happens to be the head of a department or a first-class instructor particularly well qualified for the course given. Obviously, personality is an important consideration in giving extension courses, and is often as important as scholarship.

The organization of the Department of University Extension in Massachusetts began in November, 1915, although the legislation establishing the department was signed by the Governor in the preceding May. Before any work of instruction was commenced, a careful study was made of existing educational institutions in the commonwealth to determine in what ways this new department could coöperate with existing institutions and to discover the lines of educational activity in which the facilities of the department could be most useful. It was necessary at the outset to give the most careful attention in order to avoid duplication of the work of the evening schools in the cities and towns, of state-supported vocational schools, and of educational work planned for the benefit of immigrants. Several months were required to work out the details of an organization suitable for *class* instruction, and, therefore, very little teaching in classes was started before April, 1916.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

It seemed to be apparent that in conducting correspondence courses there would be little conflict with institutions supported by taxation in Massachusetts. Nearly all educational work of this kind offered in this state except in subjects relating to agriculture, has been done by universities located in other states or by private institutions conducted primarily for profit. Large sums of money were sent out of the state every year in payment for these correspondence courses, and it was one of the objects in the establishment of this department to keep this money in the commonwealth and to give residents of the state opportunities to receive education of this kind on practically a free basis. Another important consideration favoring the early development of correspondence courses was the obvious ease in securing a necessarily large staff of instructors for part time services. Correspondence instruction makes it very easy for the teachers to correct and criticize the lesson papers at times when they are not engaged with duties following a regular program. The State Board of Education, which has supervisory control of the department, believes also that with the rapid de-

velopment of correspondence courses by the method of securing approximately equal publicity in all parts of the state, the registration in these courses indicates in a general way what subjects are likely to be most in demand and in what parts of the state there is the most need for offering the educational opportunities of this department.

The following table shows the subjects selected by a thousand students who were first enrolled in the *correspondence* courses:

Elementary English.....	170	Advanced Algebra (C).....	7
Spanish (C) ¹	87	Architectural Drawing.....	6
Civil Service.....	85	Trigonometry (C).....	5
Bookkeeping.....	84	Electric Wiring.....	5
Practical Applied Mathematics...	82	Strength of Materials (C).....	5
Mechanical Drawing (C).....	52	Heating and Lighting for Janitors.	5
Shop Arithmetic.....	38	Elementary Geometry.....	5
English Composition A (C).....	34	Practical Mechanics.....	4
Gasoline Automobiles.....	31	Practical Machine Design (C)...	4
English for New Americans.....	26	Descriptive Geometry (C).....	4
Dietetics (C).....	25	Stenography.....	4
Industrial Accounting (C).....	21	Lumber and Its Uses.....	3
Freehand Drawing.....	19	Reinforced Concrete (C).....	3
Elementary Algebra.....	18	Elements of Structures (C).....	3
Retail Selling.....	16	Materials of Construction.....	3
Plain English.....	15	Heating and Ventilating (C).....	2
Shop Sketching.....	13	Civics for New Americans.....	2
English Composition B (C).....	13	Typewriting.....	2
Concrete and Its Uses.....	11	Study of Fabrics.....	2
Industrial Management (C).....	10	United States History A (C).....	2
Commercial Correspondence.....	10	American Government (C).....	1
Economics (C).....	10	Sociology (C).....	1
Practical Steam Engineering.....	9	Hydraulics (C).....	1
Highway Engineering (C).....	8	Electric Machinery (C).....	1
Home Furnishing and Decoration.	8	Heat.....	1
Practical Electricity.....	8	Solid Geometry.....	1
Plumbing.....	8		
Advanced Shop Mathematics....	7	Total.....	1,000

¹ Courses marked (C) are of college grade.

The first enrollments in correspondence courses were received January 19, 1916, and this date may be considered the official opening of the department for educational activities. In a few weeks after this date the correspondence courses were well enough established and the work was sufficiently organized to make possible the consideration of a new development.

THE ORGANIZATION OF STUDY GROUPS

By this arrangement when more than ten students in a city or town agree to meet together once a week in a suitable class or conference room for mutual helpfulness in the study of their correspondence lessons, the department arranges to send one of the instructors in that course to meet with them at every fourth meeting of the class. When the instructor is present he discusses the difficulties which the class may have had with preceding lessons and explains also some of the difficulties the class is likely to have in the next three lessons. It is believed that the enrollment of correspondence students in study groups is an important improvement over the usual correspondence methods. Two other matters are receiving special attention in the organizing and conducting of these correspondence courses. Unusual efforts are being made to make the lesson papers of exceptional interest from the viewpoint of holding the attention of the reader. It is the general experience of those engaged in correspondence instruction that the ordinary type of textbooks, particularly the kind used in colleges, is most unsatisfactory. In the second place, unusual attention is being given to the matter of following up the work of students and in giving every possible encouragement to those who appear to be losing interest or seem to have unusual difficulties in preparing their lessons.

Another development in the methods of instruction of the department was the organizing of class instruction which differs from the methods adopted for the correspondence study groups in that these classes have an instructor in the course present at every meeting, presumably once a week. The instruction given in this class is exactly equivalent to the work given by correspondence. It is very necessary, therefore, that at each meeting of the class the same subject matter should be discussed and used for recitation that is included in a lesson as given by correspondence. When this method is followed there is a more or less exact equivalence between the work done in a correspondence course and by class instruction. The same certificate can then be issued for either type of instruction, although obviously there should be a statement to show by what method of instruction the course is taken.

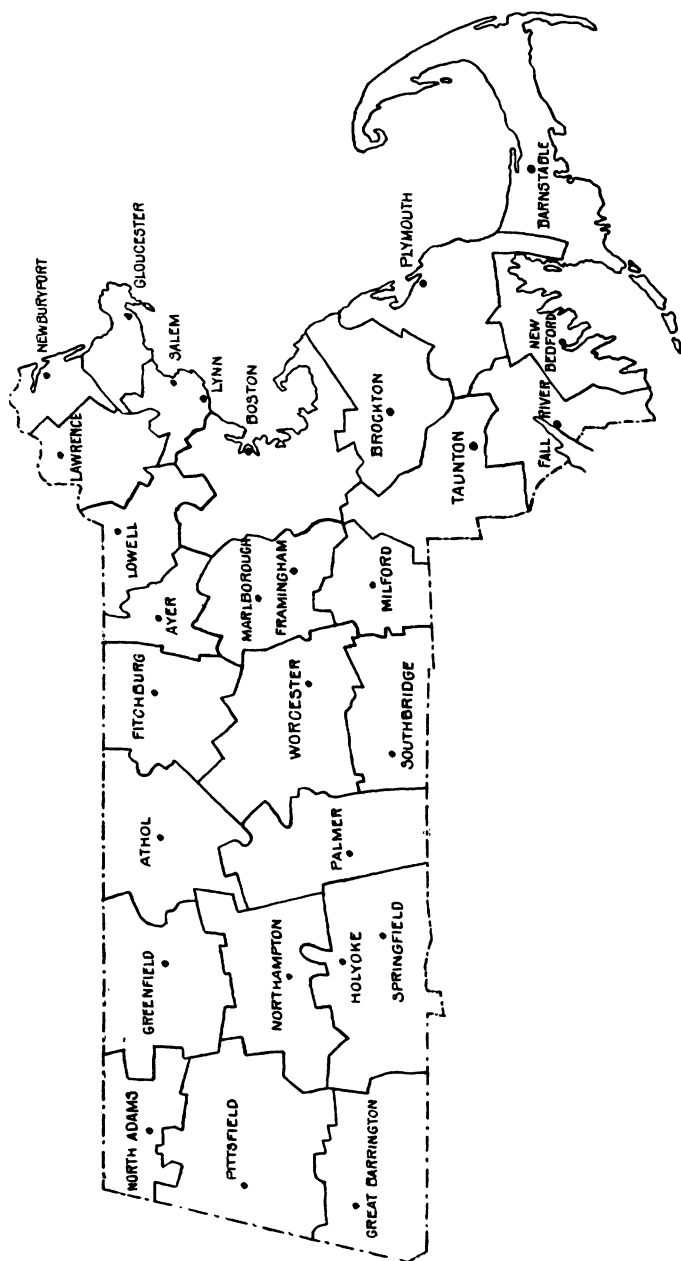
NO TUITION CHARGED

University extension as organized in Massachusetts is unique in that the correspondence courses as well as the class instruction are available to all the residents of the state without charge for instruction. These extension courses are therefore conducted upon a basis comparable with a free public school system. In many states there is no charge for instruction for those taking courses in residence at the state college or university; but in practically all these institutions there is a charge for correspondence courses and instruction given in extension classes. The Massachusetts system seems to be especially equitable in this respect. Those who can afford to go to a state college or university where the total charge is at a minimum from \$300 to \$400 per year, even where there is no charge for instruction, are much better able to pay for instruction than those who are most likely to be reached by the extension courses whether by correspondence or in classes. The former group of students is most likely to be representative of the fairly well-to-do people in a community, while the latter are likely to be the sons and daughters of the wage earners who cannot well afford the expense of going away to college on account of the large charges incurred for rooms and board, and who in many cases are earning their living and studying at the same time. Of all the students receiving collegiate instruction, obviously the extension students are least able to pay for instruction.

INSTRUCTION CENTRES WELL DISTRIBUTED

In order to make the educational activities of the department as serviceable as possible to all parts of the state, the department arranges to establish classes in any city or town where there seems to be sufficient demand. In the selection of locations for these classes, precedence is given to the larger cities or towns in each of the twenty-eight districts into which the state has been divided, as shown in the accompanying map. This arrangement follows the general plans for the Massachusetts College as proposed originally by public-spirited citizens of Boston.² According to this plan, it becomes possible for large numbers of the sons and daughters of the residents of the state to secure a collegiate education

² See *Acts of the General Court of Massachusetts of 1909*, House Bill No. 1520.



DISTRICTS FOR EXTENSION CLASSES

in an educational centre near their homes and save very large items in the cost of a college education. When it is possible for these students to live at home, the relatively large expenses for rooms and board are very much reduced. This method seems to be almost ideal for bringing the state college or university to the “doors of the people.” As regards the expense to the taxpayers of the commonwealth, there is also a great saving, as by this method, if worked out successfully, many millions of dollars are saved that would otherwise be spent for elaborate college or university buildings.